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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

COMPT. 74-0458

Executive Registry

74-5323/A

10 APR 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Brandon Grove, Jr., Staff Director
NSC Under Secretaries Committee

SUBJECT: Control of US Government Presence
Abroad (OPRED)

REFERENCE: NSC-U/SM-119-J

Mr. Rush's letter of 27 March 1974 (reference) requests my comment on a draft memorandum to the President on the indefinite extension of the program to control US Government presence abroad (OPRED). Attached to the draft memorandum is an annex containing the suggested text of a directive from the President to the Chairman, Under Secretaries Committee. This latter document, once signed, would necessitate revision of the so-called Post-OPRED Guidelines, which have provided the ground rules for the OPRED control system since their most recent restatement on 25 November 1970. It is this draft directive and its potential impact to which my comments largely pertain.

The special requirements of the Intelligence Community were recognized early in the developmental stages of the OPRED program. In his memorandum of 21 July 1969 to Under Secretary Richardson, Dr. Kissinger called for preparation by the Department of Defense and CIA of "plans for the reduction in Intelligence Community personnel," such plans to be submitted to the Under Secretaries Committee working group for review. The memorandum continued: "Recommendations will be made in consonance with the priorities for intelligence coverage established by the United States Intelligence Board, and the objective of a reduction of ten per cent in overseas personnel will be accomplished in such a way as to cause the least possible loss of access to intelligence needed for national security purposes."

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The provision for somewhat separate handling of Intelligence Community OPRED plans was consistent with my statutory responsibility for the protection of intelligence sources and methods. When we amend the OPRED procedures, we must continue that provision and, in addition, must give recognition of the responsibility, assigned me by Presidential Directive on 5 November 1971, for recommending to the President the allocation of intelligence resources. This Directive was reinforced on 22 March 1974 when the President expressed concern "that the line between substantive intelligence and intelligence resources be clearly understood and evaluated," and stressed the role of the Director of Central Intelligence as leader of the Intelligence Community. There is clearly no way I can divorce judgments about the deployment of personnel resources from these responsibilities.

For these reasons, therefore, I must demur at the suggestion in the draft Directive that the Under Secretaries Committee be empowered to "review ongoing programs overseas to identify the need to expand or reprogram ... to institute new programs ... to eliminate positions ... and to supervise ... expansion, reprogramming and reduction programs." Such review of intelligence programs is clearly the prerogative of the Intelligence Community under the leadership of the Director of Central Intelligence, and the OPRED Guidelines should so state.

The foregoing is not intended in any sense as a challenge to the principle of maintaining ceilings on overseas presence, and the central controls maintained by the Under Secretaries Committee have clearly done their job in effecting an orderly reduction in overseas staffing. I do not suggest an end to these controls nor the exclusion of Intelligence Community personnel from the OPRED ceilings. It is probable, however, that the guidelines which have governed the system since 1970 need revision, and if you wish we will be happy to provide a draft for Committee review. Any redrafting should strive for simplification and the reduction of needless paperwork. For example, where a transfer of an OPRED ceiling position is between two posts under the jurisdiction of a single geographic bureau, and the transfer is acceptable to the two Chiefs of Mission concerned, the transfer need not involve extensive review at the Washington level; the OPRED ceiling for the region is not changed by such a move. Other simplifications may be desirable as well, such as annual status reports instead of semiannual or quarterly reports. I am sure we agree that we should carry out this program with minimum possible paperwork.

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Once the Committee has reviewed the OPRED guidelines, we can prepare a draft directive which reflects agreed-upon and simplified procedures. In submitting such a directive for Presidential approval, we should consider whether to limit extension to a more specific period of time in order to ensure the benefits of periodic reviews such as the one in which we are now engaged.

/s/ W. E. Colby

W. E. Colby
Director

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Intelligence
13. C. House
NSC

Director of Central Intelligence

X1 The Chairman of the Under Secretaries Committee has proposed the indefinite extension of OPRED controls and a major expansion of the Committee's OPRED charter to include specific authority to "review ongoing programs overseas...." The attached proposed response has been coordinated in draft with Mr. Nelson and [] and incorporates suggestions made by their staffs. A copy of the 1969 Kissinger memo quoted in the second paragraph is attached; the passage quoted is on page 2 of the memo.

/s/ John D. Iams

John D. Iams, Comptroller

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